



City of Seattle

Department of Planning and Development  
D.M. Sugimura, Director

**CITY OF SEATTLE  
ANALYSIS AND DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR OF  
THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Application Number:** 3013024  
**Applicant Name:** Radim Blazej for Isola Development, LLC  
**Address of Proposal:** 4503 45<sup>th</sup> Ave SW

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION**

Land Use application to allow a three-story, five-unit rowhouse structure located in an Environmentally Critical Area (ECA). Surface parking for five vehicles will be provided on site. Existing structure to be demolished. Review includes future unit lot subdivision.

**SEPA - Environmental Determination** (SMC Chapter 25.05)

**SEPA DETERMINATION:** ☐ Exempt ☒ DNS ☐ EIS  
☐ DNS with conditions  
☐ DNS involving non-exempt grading or demolition or  
involving another agency with jurisdiction.

**BACKGROUND DATA**

**Site Description**

The subject site is a corner lot, comprising a total area of approximately 5,855 square feet, in a West Seattle neighborhood overlooking Puget Sound. The development site is located within Multifamily Lowrise Two (LR2) zone with an unlimited density limit for rowhouse development, which is the subject of this application.

The lot is located at the southwest corner of a unique intersection where three streets intersect. Southwest Oregon Street runs east and west and borders the subject lot to the north. Forty-fifth Avenue Southwest runs north and south and fronts the development site to the east, with Glenn Way Southwest diagonally intersecting on a northwest/southeast axis. A large curb bulb is featured on 45<sup>th</sup> Avenue to minimize traffic conflicts at the intersection and improve pedestrian

safety. An alley abuts the subject lot along its west property line where vehicular access is proposed. The street right-of-way is improved with a hard surface roadway and sidewalks.

The site is located on the west slope of a hill with panoramic views to the west of Puget Sound and the Olympics Mountain Range. The east half of the lot is relatively flat with the west half containing a more dramatic slope, dropping approximately 20 feet over a distance of 50 feet. The development site contains a vacant house on the east third of the subject lot surrounded by modestly dense vegetation.

The west third of the subject site contains a designated Environmental Critical Areas (ECA); 40% Steep Slope. On October 24, 2011, DPD (#6297112) approved a request to exempt the site from steep slope standards, with conditions the owner adheres to all other ECA submittal, general, and landslide-hazard development standards.



### Vicinity Description

Zoning in the area includes a vast area of residential Single Family to the west and north, and two pockets of Multifamily Lowrise Two (LR2) running along 45<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and along 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue, one block northeast of the subject site. To the east, across 45<sup>th</sup> Neighborhood Commercial Two with a height limit of 40 feet (NC2-40) begins the western edge of commercial development surrounding California Avenue SW, two blocks due east.

Topographically, the site is located near the top bench of a hillside that abruptly descends downwards in excess of 40% to its base. Though this area is dominated by the slope, nevertheless the area is well developed with residential structures. Housing stock within the area features a wide variety of structures from single-story wood frame structures to four-story apartment buildings.

Abutting the development site to the south is a one-story single family structure. Across the street to the east, a multifamily structure (apartment type) with a street-level commercial presence currently dominates the intersection. Set in the planting strip along 45<sup>th</sup> Avenue, adjacent to the development site is an exceptional tree (Deadora Cedar, *Cedrus deodara*) that will be protected during construction. Due in part to the street alignment, the tree maintains a significant presence at the intersection.

### Description of Proposal

The applicant proposes to demolish an existing structure and construct one three-story structure containing five rowhouse units stepping downward, east to west, on a designated 40% steep slope ECA. The applicant sought and was granted an ECA exemption (under permit number 6297712) because of previous grading activity associated with street improvements. The project will adhere to all other ECA submittal, general, landslide-hazard, and development standards.

The five units will have their front entries located adjacent to SW Oregon Street, terracing down in accordance with the sloping grade conditions at the development site. The project includes established surface parking in the rear accessed off the alley. An exceptional tree has been identified in the SW Glenn Way right-of-way which will be protected by the applicant during construction with safeguard for the future.

### Public Comment

Notice of the proposal was issued on February 16, 2012 and concluded on February 29, 2012. Two public comments were received during the comment period. Potential adverse impacts identified included; traffic surrounding the corner of Glenn Way and SW Oregon, aesthetic encroachment of larger scaled development upon single family dwelling neighborhoods, and a desire for more information about this proposal.

### Environmentally Critical Areas Regulations

SMC Section 25.09.180 provides specific standards for all development on steep slopes and steep slope buffers on existing lots, including the general requirement that development shall be avoided in these areas whenever possible.

General Requirements and standards are described in Section 25.09.060 of the ECA ordinance and include the recording of conditions of approval, the recording of the identified ECA areas in a permanent covenant with the property as well as specific construction methods and procedures. The proposal must also comply with the specific requirements for development in areas with landslide potential areas (Section 25.09.080), wetlands (Section 25.09.160), steep slopes (Section 25.09.180), and trees and vegetation (Section 25.09.320). All decisions subject to these standards are non-appealable Type I decisions made by the Director (or designee) of DPD.

### ANALYSIS - SEPA

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the environmental checklist submitted by the applicant dated February 8, 2012. The Department of Planning and Development has analyzed and annotated the environmental checklist submitted by the project applicant; reviewed the project plans and any additional information in the file; and pertinent comments which may have been received regarding this proposed action have been considered. As indicated in the checklist, this action may result in adverse impacts to the environment. However, due to their temporary nature and limited effects, the impacts are not expected to be significant.

The SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665.D) states “where City regulations have been adopted to address an environmental impact, it shall be presumed that such regulations are adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation,” subject to limitations (see below under Long-term Impacts). Several adopted City codes and/or ordinances provide mitigation for some of the identified impacts. Specifically these are: the Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code (soil erosion); and Building Code (construction standards). Compliance with these codes and ordinances will be adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation of identified adverse impacts.

Under SMC Section 25.05.908 B, the scope of environmental review within critical areas is limited to documenting that the proposal is consistent with ECA regulations, SMC Chapter 25.09, and to evaluating potentially significant impacts on the environmentally critical areas resources not adequately addressed in the ECA Policies or the requirements of Chapter 25.09. The proposal, as conditioned by this decision, is determined to be consistent with ECA regulations. Potentially adverse impacts on the ECAs are further discussed below.

#### Short-term Impacts

The following temporary or construction-related impacts to the environmentally critical area are expected: 1) temporary soil erosion; and 2) increased vibration from construction operations and equipment. These impacts are not considered significant because they are temporary and/or minor in scope (SMC 25.05.794). Codes and development regulations applicable to this proposed project will provide sufficient mitigation and no further conditioning or mitigation is warranted pursuant to applicable SEPA policies.

#### Long-term Impacts

Long-term or use-related impacts on the ECAs are also anticipated from the proposal: increased surface water runoff from greater site coverage by increased impervious surfaces; and increased demand on public services and utilities. These long-term impacts are not expected to be significant.

The expected long-term impacts are typical of multifamily residential development and are expected to be mitigated by the City's adopted codes and/or ordinances. Specifically these applicable codes and ordinances are: Building Code requirements and ECA regulations (to ensure that proposed development will be constructed in a safe manner); and the Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code (storm water runoff from additional site coverage by impervious surface). DPD geotechnical engineers have reviewed the proposal and the geotechnical studies provided with this application, and have no further conditions on the project regarding drainage and foundation types.

#### CONDITIONS - SEPA

None.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ (signature on file)  
Bradley Wilburn, Land Use Planner  
Department of Planning and Development

Date: May 17, 2012